

talking about energy and how we get some issues resolved so we can deal, in the long term, with energy, which is a big issue for us not only because it is energy but because it affects everyone every day. It affects jobs. It affects the economy.

I think one of the issues we need to be doing and continuously working on is health care so it is available for everyone and is affordable. We can make some changes there, there is no question.

We need to make sure we are doing all we can in taking a long look at what is happening in the Middle East, and that we can get our job completed in Iraq, and make sure we do not end up being singularly involved with Iran. Those are some of the issues.

I am, of course, very impressed with the way this system works and very impressed with the way this Senate works, but I do find sometimes that I think we get it all jammed up for reasons that are not really part of what we are here designated to do.

So I just wanted to share my frustration with that and hope we can work with the leaders on both sides of the aisle to find some ways for us to address those issues that are before us for the American people, to do the job we are assigned to do and have the responsibility to do, and to move forward.

It is frustrating to be here but once a day, for example, when there are lots of issues out there. Let's decide them, let's vote on them, let's get on with it, instead of—look at this place, empty, empty most of the day because we have an obstruction in the system.

So, Mr. President, I hope we can find some ways to remedy the situation. And I certainly would like to be a part of finding those remedies.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAFEE). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS WITH UKRAINE

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of calendar No. 370, H.R. 1053.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will state the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1053) to authorize the extension of nondiscriminatory treatment (normal trade relations treatment) to the products of Ukraine.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time, passed, the motion

to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

I further ask consent that S. 632, the Senate companion measure, be indefinitely postponed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 1053) was read the third time and passed.

Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, last November, the Senate passed a bill I introduced, S. 632, authorizing the extension of permanent normal trade relations with Ukraine. During the post-Cold War era, Ukraine has continued to be subject to the provisions of the Jackson-Vanik amendment to the Trade Act of 1974, which sanctions nations for failure to comply with freedom of emigration requirements. My bill repeals permanently the application of Jackson-Vanik to Ukraine.

Yesterday, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 1053, the House companion to my bill. I am extremely pleased that the Senate has passed this legislation today.

Since the end of the Cold War, Ukraine has demonstrated a commitment to meet freedom of emigration requirements, and to abide by free market principles and good governance. Improving trade will strengthen the growing relationship between our two nations. The United States will continue its strong support of Ukraine and its commitment to democracy and free markets.

I encourage President Yushchenko to continue his no-tolerance policy for antisemitism in Ukraine. I look forward to President Bush signing this bill into law as a further signal of United States support for democracy and free enterprise in Ukraine. This is especially important before the parliamentary elections in Ukraine on March 26.

Extraordinary events have occurred in Ukraine. A free press has revolted against intimidation and reasserted itself. An emerging middle class has found its political footing. A new generation has embraced democracy and openness. A society has rebelled against the illegal activities of the previous government. It is in our interest to recognize and to protect these advances in Ukraine.

The United States has a long record of cooperation with Ukraine through the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Act. Ukraine inherited the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world with the fall of the Soviet Union.

Through the Nunn-Lugar program, the United States has assisted Ukraine in eliminating this deadly arsenal and joining the Nonproliferation Treaty as a nonnuclear state. The United States can and should do more to eliminate conventional weapons stockpiles and assist other nations in detecting and interdicting weapons of mass destruction. These functions are underfunded, fragmented, and in need of high-level support.

This was pointed out to me during a visit Senator BARACK OBAMA and I enjoyed in Ukraine in early September of last year.

The Government's current response to threats from vulnerable conventional weapons stockpiles is dispersed between several programs at the Department of State. We believe the planning, coordination, and implementation of this function should be consolidated into one office at the State Department with a budget that is commensurate with the threat posed by these weapons.

We look forward to continuing to address these issues and making progress on all fronts in Ukraine. The permanent waiver of Jackson-Vanik and the establishment of permanent normal relations will be the foundation on which a burgeoning partnership between our nations can further grow and prosper.

Mr. President, I am pleased to mention that on this auspicious day of our relations with Ukraine, the Foreign Minister of Ukraine is in Washington. We have had opportunities to visit, to share views, and to assert, once again, the solidarity of our friendship.

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I rise today to support H.R. 1053, legislation to extend permanent normal trade relations with Ukraine. This is the House companion to the bill, S. 632, that Senator LUGAR and I introduced and shepherded through the Senate last year.

Senator LUGAR just forcefully outlined the issues in only the way that the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee can. I agree with what he said and cannot say it any better. So, I will be brief.

As the chairman mentioned, this bill comes at a critical time for Ukraine—on the heels of dramatic presidential elections and shortly before important elections in the Rada. This legislation grew out of our trip to Ukraine last August, as we saw firsthand the key role that the United States must play in consolidating prodemocracy, pro-free market reforms. I believe it is critical that we continue to send a clear message to the Ukrainian people that there are tangible benefits to continuing down this path. This bipartisan legislation does just that.

It is my honor to be the lead cosponsor of the Senate companion bill and I look forward to this legislation enhancing the U.S.-Ukraine relationship. I look forward to the President signing this bill into law.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.